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30 January 1964

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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

*South Vietnam: [Dissatisfied members of the military junta seized control in Saigon early this morning in a bloodless coup.]

[The coup was led by Major General Nguyen Khanh, commander of the I Military Corps in the north, with the support of Major General Tran Thien Khiem, commander of the III Military Corps surrounding Saigon, and elements of the airborne and armor brigades. It is backed by all corps commanders. The key figures in the coup are considered friendly to Americans.]

[Khanh has revealed that the action was planned about five days ago as a result of information that some leading generals in the government were receptive to the French proposals for a neutralist Vietnam. He claimed to have secured agreement from the former junta chairman, General "Big" Minh, to move against the police director, General Xuan, alleged to be plotting a neutralist coup, and to remove the unpopular Prime Minister Tho.]

[Minh is under detention, apparently after refusing an offer to remain as a figurehead of a new regime. Tho is also being held.]

[General Minh's two top subordinates, armed forces chief General Don and High Command chief General Kim are also under arrest, along with General Xuan and Interior Minister Major General Ton.]

[That Dinh. The new coup leaders appear to have been particularly suspicious of the strong French background of Don and Kim who had been tightening their control, relying on generals recently returned from exile in France, while leaving corps commanders little influence.]

[According to the Saigon radio, General Khanh has assumed the top position formerly held by Minh. General Khiem is expected to become armed forces commander. Khanh, a vigorous commander, has stated that he has no clear-cut political program, and that he intends to look to Ambassador Lodge for guidance.]

[The change-over in Saigon comes at a time when the military junta was just beginning to show signs of developing a more effective counterinsurgency effort. This effort is bound to suffer at least temporary dislocation. Moreover, the open split among the top military leaders could have serious repercussions on the morale and sense of direction of junior officers and troops. Big Minh's refusal to lend his considerable prestige to the new order is a clear liability.]

[It remains to be seen whether the Viet Cong will attempt to exploit this new upheaval to the extent they did after the 1 November overthrow of Diem, when stepped-up Communist pressure in the provinces reaped significant gains.]

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Zanzibar: [Zanzibar's unstable political situation may be leading to a Communist takeover.]

[Although an appearance of order has been restored on the island, the cadre of 40-odd Cuban-trained militants has not been disarmed. The 300-man contingent of Tanganyikan police sent to Zanzibar immediately after the coup to restore law and order is reportedly being used only to direct traffic.]

[No single individual or group in the new regime yet seems to exercise effective power, but the pro-Communist element is more likely than others to profit from the prevalent fear and uncertainty. The influence of the relatively moderate African nationalists in the new Revolutionary Council, among them President Karume, already is being limited by Foreign Minister Babu's pro-Communist faction.]

[The political and ideological leanings of "Field Marshal" Okello remain unclear. Babu and the pro-Communists may not be making an effort to curb Okello because they believe that continuing instability will serve their purposes.]

[Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Malik is reported to be heading toward Zanzibar via Somalia. The East German news agency claims that Zanzibar has recognized East Germany and has asked for an East German mission.]

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Southern Rhodesia: Africans in Southern Rhodesia appear to be increasingly prone to use violence in their political struggles.

In a clash on 28 January in which two Africans were killed, police were forced to use strong-arm methods to curb demonstrations by the followers of nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo. Nkomo had just been sentenced to a short prison term for nationalist activities.

The police are attempting to carry out Prime Minister Field's plan to keep the Africans disorganized by persistent harassment, although they often appear to go beyond the mandate Field has given them.

The Africans have become conditioned to violent methods both by the heavyhandedness of the police and by the intimidation and gang warfare that have been practiced within the African townships since the nationalist movement split last July.

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The government has had some success so far, but with tempers rising on both sides, its tactics may provoke new outbreaks instead of preventing them.

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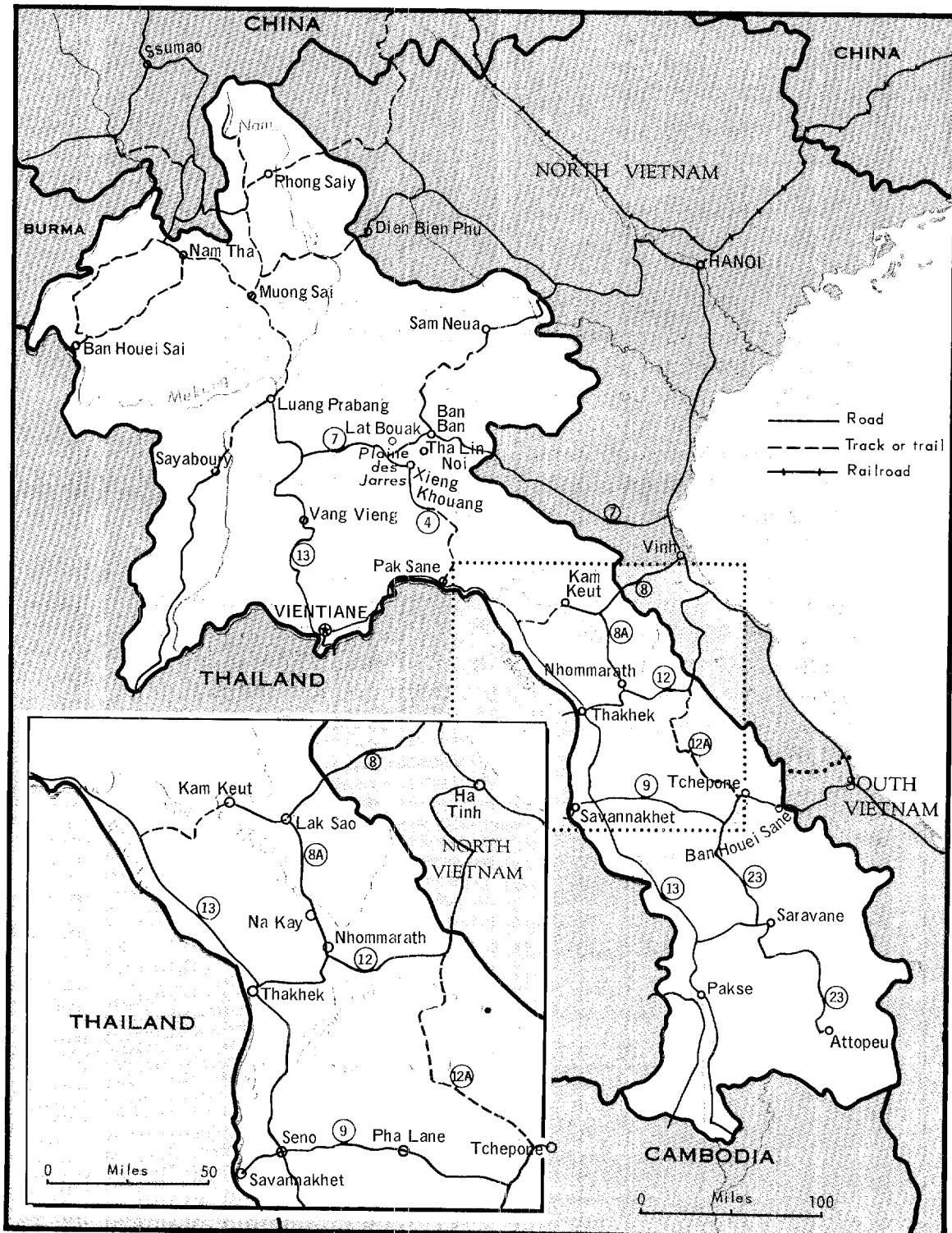
Bolivia: The expulsion of Vice President Lechin by the national convention of the ruling MNR party on 28 January changes the arena of his struggle with President Paz, but does not settle it.

Lechin's pro-Communist left sector of the MNR may hold its own convention within the next month and nominate Lechin for the presidency.

The Lechin sector may then seek to join forces with other disgruntled opposition groups in an attempt to defeat Paz and the MNR vice-presidential nominee, Federico Fortun, in the June elections. There is little chance, however, that Lechin could mobilize enough strength to win power in this manner.

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NOTES

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Communist China - Africa: The Chinese have run into difficulties in East Africa as a result of the recent armed uprisings there. Chou En-lai has been forced to drop Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda from his itinerary, and Kenya has imposed restrictions on the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi. Leaders of the three African nations have been in consultation, and their actions appear to result from shared suspicions that Peiping may have abetted leaders of the Zanzibari and Tanganyikan revolts.

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*Laos: Communist forces, which for the past six weeks have been engaged in nibbling tactics in central Laos, now have gained complete control over the strategic Route 8-A supply artery linking Lak Sao with Route 12. By 29 January, neutralist and right-wing troops had abandoned their remaining positions in the Na Kay area in the face of strong enemy moves. The Pathet Lao, with substantial North Vietnamese troop support, had begun their drive in mid-December after rightist forces had pressed along Route 8 to within 20 miles of the North Vietnamese border.

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